

Hand in hand

61 days in school

10 July 2017 The first time we held hands...

was our first day walking to school together. You just smiled when I talked about the weather and things around us. You just smiled when I asked you questions, a one-way conversation, but still, you held my hand. That July, you only went to school for 10 days, so I said you need to go to school for five days, Monday to Friday, then rest for two days on Saturday and Sunday. And you listened.

1 Aug 2017 The first time we played "I spy" ...

you spied the orange flower, the pink bag and the red / white flags. We took turns to spy. You learned a new color, grey, as we walked past the condo with the grey wall. Soon, you could describe the grey clouds that threatened to rain on us as we walked a little more briskly home.

That August, we learned to spy numbers around us – your favorite was bus numbers and HDB block numbers. “I see the number” you exclaim, “8-3” as the bus passes by. “I see the number 1-7-4-A” you say, as we walk past the block of flats. Later, we even read out lamp-post numbers and fire hydrant numbers as we walked past them.

You liked to sing but you only liked some songs. I sang to you many nursery rhyme songs – but only Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and Mary had a Little Lamb won your heart. Our first song was the alphabet song. We took turns - I sing, you sing. One of your favorite songs was the Days of the Week song. You learned that if yesterday was Sunday, then today is Monday and tomorrow will be Tuesday. We talked about what Auntie would cook for us each day – we looked forward to porridge on Tuesdays and macaroni on Thursdays. You had to remember to bring your own healthy snack on Fruit Fridays.

28 Aug 2017 The first time you initiated a conversation ...

**Names are shortened to initials to protect confidentiality*

you told me “I see *N*”. We talked about your friends in school. *D*, *FY*, *P* and *S* were some of the names you mentioned. “I play ball” you tell me; about the games you played with your friends. It’s the start of many conversations you’d initiate. You would say: “Me and *D* same size”, “I see the numbers”, “I see the words”, “That my father’s friend”, “my mother’s friend”, “that’s my friend”, “I want take bus today because it’s so hot”, “When it’s hot I like to eat ice-cream”. We’d have many conversations about school, food and fun.

Me: Did you enjoy school today?

You: Yes...but no play

Me: Did you do anything fun?

You: I put the flower

Me: That's right, you put paper flowers on the Rangoli

You: *F Y* share with me

Me: That's nice

You: *F Y* hug me

Me: Aww that's sweet. You hugged each other.

You: Yes

25 Oct 2017 The first time we talked about number sequence ...

You: I see the number ... one one *F*

Me: What's the next number?

You: Er...one two *F*

Me: What's the next one?

You: one three *F*...

Me: What's after that?

You: two zero *F*

Me: one nine is nineteen, so after nineteen it's twenty

You: I need to count to twenty: 1,2,3...18,19,20!

Me: Can you count backwards? 20, 19, 18...10...

You: 9,8,7...4,3,2,1

15 Nov Your last day of school...

You read the bus numbers going past: "I see the numbers! Eighty-five...eighty-three". You say the numbers from one to one hundred! You know how high the overhead bridge is: "four point five meters". You know the vehicle speed limit on Punggol Central: "Sixty".

...our last good-bye.